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**Testimony for the
Program Review & Investigation Committee
from
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Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges
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On behalf of the member institutions of the Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges (CCIC), I am submitting testimony in reference to the PRI Alignment of Postsecondary Education and Employment Study. Founded in 1932, CCIC represents sixteen accredited nonprofit independent colleges and universities in Connecticut. These institutions are bound by a common commitment to quality instruction and dedicated to collaborative efforts that strengthen the independent sector of higher education.

The purposes of CCIC are:

- To articulate the public benefit of independent higher education at both the state and national levels and inform public policy decisions relating to the interests of member institutions;
- To meet the workforce needs and enhance the economy of Connecticut by collaborating with the business community on the development of statewide and institutional programs and activities that promote academic excellence and opportunities for growth;
- To preserve the autonomy and independence of CCIC member colleges and universities; and,
- To facilitate cooperative efforts among member institutions aimed at improving services or reducing costs.

Connecticut's role in our country's heritage as a location rich in resources and open to innovation was secured when Thomas Hooker first moved here. Many years later, that role is under challenge by a set of demographic and economic forces that must be tackled now lest we lose our competitive advantage. As outlined in our purpose statement, CCIC member colleges and universities understand the key role that they play in helping Connecticut meet its workforce needs. We also take seriously our role in providing access to students of all income levels and ethnicity. While this is critical to those students, it is equally as critical for maintaining an educated workforce as our population ages and diversifies.

In making sure that students are able to complete their relevant post-high school programs in order to join Connecticut's workforce, we need to make sure that students come to college prepared to tackle the work, that they have access to financial aid and that the colleges and universities provide relevant academic programs along with experiential learning in and advising about various fields.

Albertus Magnus College, Connecticut College, Fairfield University, Goodwin College,
Mitchell College, Quinnipiac University, Rensselaer at Hartford, Sacred Heart University, Saint Joseph College, St. Vincent's College,
Trinity College, University of Bridgeport, University of Hartford, University of New Haven, Wesleyan University, Yale University

Insight may be gained on most of these issues from the data collected in response to a recent survey of CCIC members for this study:

Preparation—Several schools report that incoming students need remediation in either math or writing. This can be both costly and time consuming for the student and should be dealt with in high school. Additionally, the independent sector actively works with returning students who seek to complete degrees or to enhance or refresh their skills so as to be better placed in the job market.

Career Services & Advising—All CCIC members report having active career services for their students. An excerpt from Albertus Magnus College says it well; “The Office of Career Services provides a variety of programs designed to help students make appropriate career choices and career plans—at all points in their individual career development timetable. Students are guided to identify their career goals early on in order to find employment that enables them to utilize their individual talents and training. In addition, the Office of Career Services supports students as they develop skills for lifelong career planning. The resources in the Career Center connect students with information sources and employers. These career services are available to current Albertus students and alumni. “

Additionally, students are encouraged or required to take on internships as a way of learning about different jobs and connecting with employers. In fact, CCIC was a founding member of the InternHere.com website that links students seeking internships with companies in Connecticut and western Massachusetts. Created as a way of keeping students in the region by helping them to learn about local employers, this site has attracted students from all over the world and has enabled employers to publicize what they do while connecting with available students in various fields. Support for InternHere in the Connecticut state budget should continue.

Academic Program Development—Member institutions strive to provide relevant and sought after majors and degree and certificate programs. They connect with the employer community through advisory relationships, internships, research collaborations, guest teaching opportunities and statewide economic development efforts. Many of them also link with area community colleges regarding program articulation. In developing new programs, they assess the academic foundations and rigor, institutional fit, available teaching, support and faculty resources and market viability. Proposed programs at these regionally accredited institutions go through various extensive on-campus reviews. Only the academically and financially strong programs are ultimately offered.

This process of program development is slowed by Connecticut’s statutory anomaly that mandates that independent college programs (with the exception of the four oldest independents) go to the Board of Governors for Higher Education for review and approval. The Board reviews the quality of the proposed programs. Data collected by CCIC show that of the thirty-one states reporting, twenty-three have no state program approval for independent colleges. Eight states have some kind of approval although in three of these cases, it is limited or by exception or consists of a review rather than approval process.

The recent survey results show that the BOGHE process currently takes 3-6 months. In practice, however, given the timing of meetings and the time it takes to advertise a program, this can mean that a school loses an entire academic year before being able to admit students to a program that receives no state funding and that has been fully vetted at the campus level by an accredited higher education institution.

Access—Need-based financial aid programs help to ensure access to college. Due to the weakened economy, more students are eligible for need-based aid because of family job loss, investment loss or lowered income. Connecticut’s CICS and CAPCS grant programs go a long way toward helping Connecticut students who lack resources go to the college or university of their choice in their home state. These grants are key pieces of the college funding puzzle for students who must patch together family, college-provided, federal and state aid to pay their college expenses. Connecticut must strive to maintain funding for these effective grant programs.

Connecticut is lucky to have such a robust independent sector. We are collectively the third largest employer in the State, provide cultural, athletic and educational opportunities for residents of our surrounding areas, and educate Connecticut residents and draw out of state and international students to the region. We consistently award just under half of the total degrees in the State including more than half of the four-year and above degrees given to minority students and more than half the degrees given in key economic cluster areas. We have close ties to the business and research communities and graduate, among others, allied health workers, teachers and engineers who participate in Connecticut's economy.

College graduates, who stay and work in Connecticut, like the more than 195,000 resident alumni of CCIC institutions, will fuel tomorrow's economic growth. As educators, employers and community partners, we stand ready to assist you in strengthening the linkages between higher education and the employer community.

Ten Reasons Connecticut Needs Independent Colleges

CCIC member institutions have a long history of meeting the needs of the state and its residents. Here is a short list of some of the ways we add value to Connecticut in 2009.

Reason 1—ENABLING STUDENT SUCCESS

- 79% first time freshman retention rate
- 55% of Bachelor's degree seeking students graduate in four years
- Award 49% of baccalaureate and 64% of graduate degrees given in Connecticut

Reason 2—MEETING ECONOMIC CLUSTER DEMAND (four-year and above)

- Award 71% of all computer and information science degrees
- Award 53% of all biological and life science degrees
- Award 61% of all health profession related science degrees
- Award 51% of all engineering and related technologies degrees

Reason 3—EDUCATING DIVERSE STUDENT BODY

- Award 57% of all four year and above degrees earned by minority students
- Enroll over half of the minority students attending a four-year program
- Of our 63,247 students, 1 in 5 is a student of color

Reason 4—ATTRACTING BRAIN POWER

- Attract more students from other states/countries than Connecticut's other sectors
- Have over 195,186 alumni living in Connecticut who add to the skilled workforce and pay over \$1.2 billion in taxes

Reason 5—CONNECTING CONNECTICUT WITH THE WORLD

- Over 5000 international students study at our member colleges and universities
- Non-traditional students find a range of options including off-campus and satellite locations, accelerated degree completion programs, and weekend, evening and online classes
- 6% of our students study abroad each year

Reason 6—GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY

- Students provide thousands of hours of volunteer and community service hours
- Faculty and staff serve as mentors, volunteers, and professional resources Community groups, schools and local sports activities use campus facilities
- Campus cultural events are open to community members and enrich the intellectual and artistic fabric of our state

Reason 7—CHALLENGING ECONOMIC DISPARITIES

- Pell Grant recipients at member schools increased by 41% from 97-07 when total enrollment increased by only 8%
- State funded need-based grants went to 5,922 students in FY 08
- Award over \$457 million in institutional aid
- 77% of students receive financial aid with an average award of almost \$17,000
- Low and middle-income students attend independent colleges and universities at almost the same rate as four-year state institutions while the median income is lower in the independent sector

Reason 8—INVESTING IN CONNECTICUT

- CCIC member institutions can't move out of state like other businesses.
- Generate a total economic impact in Connecticut of \$6.2 billion including \$3.3 billion in direct spending
- From 2003-2007, invested over \$528 million in institutional capital expense resulting in a \$2.3 billion impact on the economy

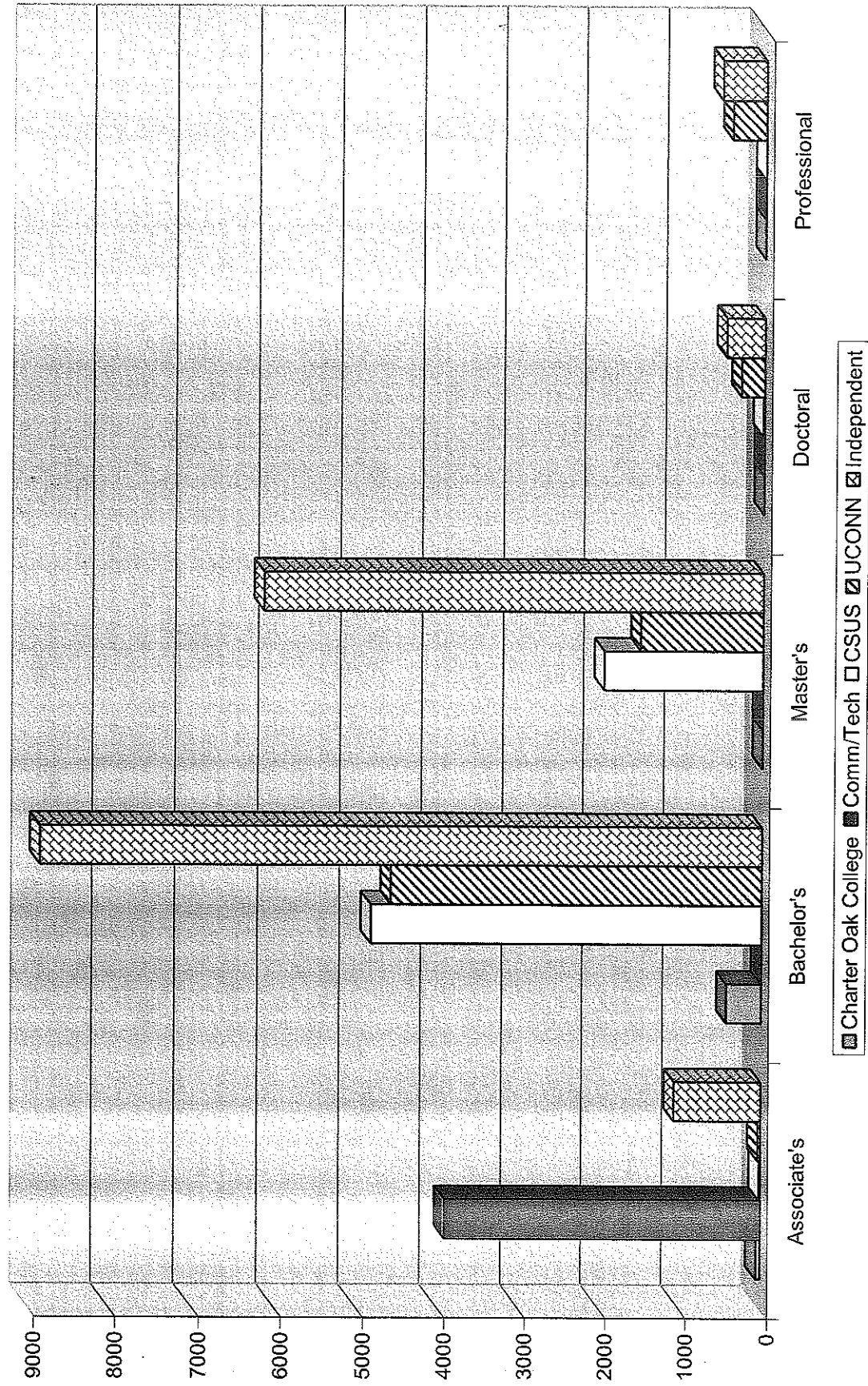
Reason 9—PROVIDING JOBS

- As a group, serve as Connecticut's third largest employer with 22,179 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees
- Create 58,891 FTE positions in the rest of Connecticut's economy

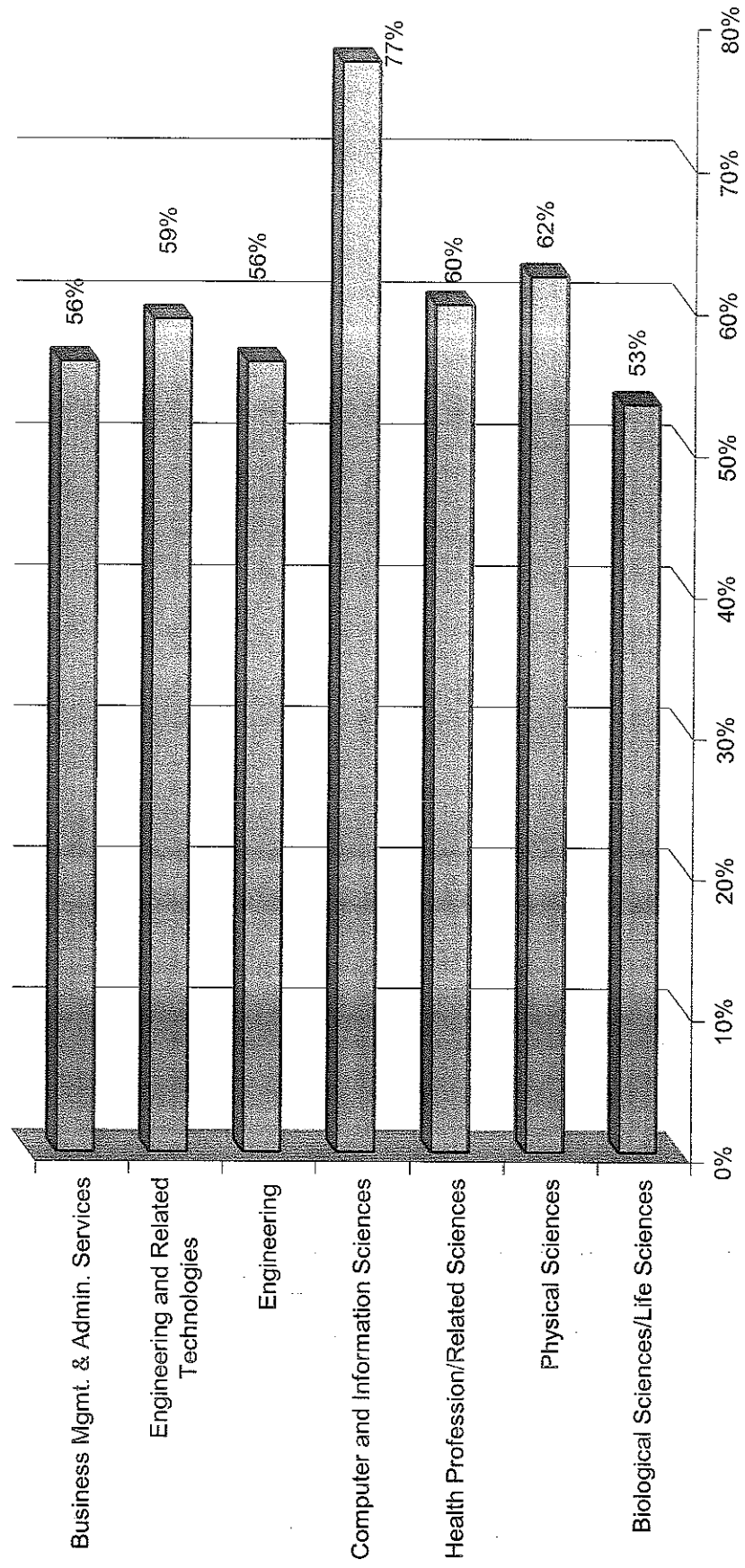
Reason 10—SAVING TAXPAYER MONEY

- Avoid \$3.4 billion annually in subsidies that would be required to enroll an equivalent number of students in Connecticut public colleges and universities
- FY 09 investment in independent college students through grant aid was less than 3% of all higher education spending while almost half of the baccalaureate degrees came out of this sector
- FY 06 state cost per degree in independent sector was \$929 compared to the \$54,603 state cost per degree in the public sector

2007-08 Degrees Awarded Statewide



**Statewide Industry Cluster Degrees Awarded by Independent Colleges
2008 Bachelor's and Above**



Connecticut Private College Enrollment by Geographic Distribution, Fall 2007		
Residency	Number	Percentage
In-State	27,142	43.1%
Other States	30,583	48.6%
Foreign	5,179	8.2%
Total	62,904	100.0%

Source: IPEDS Enrollment Data 2006-2007.

